

# Friends of Michigan Midwives

support for midwives and midwife-friendly legislation

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## Testimony in Support of House Bill 4598

### A Bill to Establish Licensure for Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs)

#### House Regulatory Reform Committee, June 10, 2015

Friends of Michigan Midwives, the consumer organization supporting midwives in this state, thanks you for granting a hearing to HB 4598, Rep. McBroom's bill to license Certified Professional Midwives. This measure will ensure that parents who are seeking an out-of-hospital birth know that their midwife meets professional standards. This is difficult to discern at present, as Michigan law makes no distinction between midwives with no formal education or training, and highly trained and educated midwives who have earned the CPM credential.

In addition to understanding that some families will always choose out-of-hospital birth and deserve to have qualified attendants, we appreciate these benefits that CPM care confers:

1. *Safety.* Research confirms that low-risk out-of-hospital births are just as safe as low-risk hospital births – and sometimes safer.<sup>1</sup> CPMs receive extensive training in early and accurate risk assessment and preventive care, and are known for providing the intense, individualized prenatal care that is one of the most important factors leading to healthy mothers and babies.
2. *Consumer preference.* For most women, pregnancy is a normal, natural, low-risk condition that rarely requires medical intervention or hospital care. While the education and training received by physicians and nurse-midwives is very important to women experiencing high-risk pregnancies, the use of life-saving technology when it is *not* needed actually creates more risk. Many mothers and families who select out-of-hospital birth are hoping to avoid unnecessary use of that technology.
3. *Access.* Michigan suffers from a shortage of maternity care services, with many pregnant women living over an hour from the nearest hospital. In these areas, a midwife is often the only provider. Poor women experience even greater barriers. States with well-established midwife licensure have increased access and achieved significant health care savings.

For all these reasons, we support CPM licensure in the form of H.B. 4598 and urge all members of the House Regulatory Reform Committee to favor it with their vote. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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<sup>1</sup> Cheyney, et al., Outcomes of Care for 16,924 Planned Home Births in the United States: The Midwives Alliance of North America Statistics Project, 2004 to 2009, *J Midwifery Womens Health* 2014;00:1–11